

Africa

WHITE SISTERS

JAN-FEB.
1954

THE WHITE SISTERS
now number
over 1800

AMERICAN NOVITIATE
BELLEVILLE, ILL.

215 Schools

113 Dispensaries

50 Hospitals

44 Maternity Hospitals

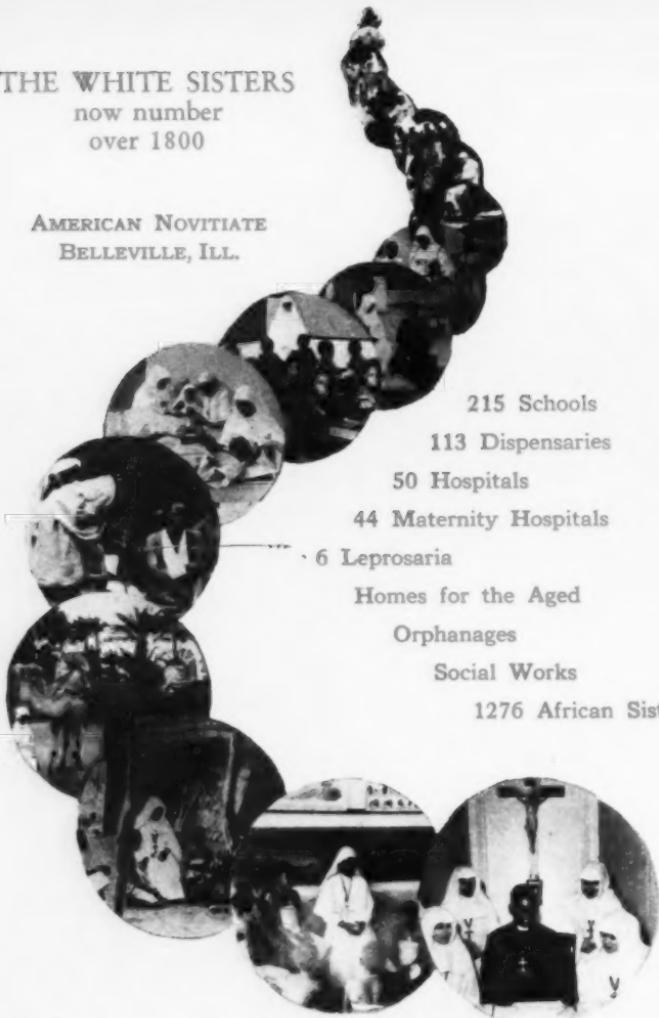
6 Leprosaria

Homes for the Aged

Orphanages

Social Works

1276 African Sisters



AFRICA, Volume XI, Number 1, is edited and published bi-monthly with ecclesiastical approbation by the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters). Office of Publication: White Sisters, 319 Middlesex Ave., Metuchen, New Jersey. Annual subscription \$1.00. Entered as second class matter December 15, 1931, at the Post Office of Metuchen, New Jersey, under the act of March 3, 1879.



The
MAN
BEHIND
IT ALL



*Charles Cardinal Lavigerie
who loved Christ and loved
Africa, who spent himself to give
AFRICA TO CHRIST and
CHRIST TO AFRICA.*

"Cab, Sir?"

"Yes,—Albert Hall—and sharp.
I'm late already."

The short, portly man pocketed his watch and got into the cab. The coachman whipped his horses to a quick trot. Down Palace Garden they sped, past St. Mary Abbots' with its tall spires, along Kensington Road, and the Albert Hall, recently built in memory of the late Prince Consort, was reached.

He was late. The hall was packed. A little manipulation with his elbows, and he managed to

squeeze in somehow between a "Belle Dame Sans Merci", whose ostrich feather tortured his eye, and a sufferer from catarrh who gave him further opportunities of expiating his late arrival.

What had filled the Albert Hall to overflowing, that evening of July 31, 1888? On the Platform could be seen the Earl of Granville, Commander Cameron, Cardinal Manning, and various dignitaries of the leading religious bodies, as well as numerous prominent laymen. A hush fell upon this distinguished gathering, as the

Earl introduced a stately figure, unmistakably ecclesiastic, nay more—unmistakably Roman, and asked him to do the assembly the honor of opening the proceedings. And who was this Roman prelate? Cardinal Lavigerie, Primate of Africa. The late arrival soon forgot his discomfort, as he sat spell-bound, with the thousands who had come from far and near to hear him.

The address was delivered in French; yet not a sound was heard from the vast audience, though there were some who understood few, if any, of the speaker's words. Yet they were moved, no less than those who understood, by the impassioned eloquence of this mighty man, so evidently on fire with love for God and man, for he spoke on a theme that revealed the intensity of his love for both . . . the abolition of slavery in Africa. And twenty times had he to pause and wait until the enthusiastic applause had subsided.

During his speech, the Cardinal referred to his visit to the grave of the great explorer, Livingstone, in Westminster Abbey.

"I was deeply moved," he said, "to read the words inscribed on his tomb. They are the words Livingstone himself wrote when he was dying: 'All I can add in my solitude, is, may Heaven's rich

blessing come down on every one, American, English or Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world (slavery)'".

"Gentlemen," he continued, "you are the inheritors of his glory, and you must be the executors of his last wishes."

In touching language, he proceeded to plead "the cause of liberty, of humanity, of justice . . . the gigantic task of suppressing Moslem slavery, for that would deal the death-blow to internal slave traffic in Africa."

So this primate of the Church aflame with the fire Christ Himself came on earth to enkindle appealed for sympathy and help on behalf of the most pitiable of all mankind the persecuted slaves of Africa. Not only England, but also France, Belgium and Germany, were won by his fiery eloquence and subscribed to the policy of destroying the African slave-trade.

That was sixty-five years ago . . . the name of Cardinal Lavigerie is venerated by those who owe to him the existence of their Societies, his spiritual sons and daughters, the White Fathers and White Sisters, who are carrying on his work for the conversion of Africa. He was indeed one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century. He was great in every sense of the word, even in phys-

ique. God gave him gifts above the ordinary, and to his nobility of bearing were joined a lofty mind, a fascinating personality and a soul entirely given to Jesus Christ.

To him and by him to his spiritual offspring, was entrusted an immense task, the evangelizing of the negro peoples of West Africa and the countries about the Great Equatorial Lakes.

At the time when Pope Leo XIII, but four days after his elevation to the Chair of Peter, committed the mission of Central Africa to Cardinal Lavigerie and his young Society of White Fathers,

slaves formed a not inconsiderable part of his flock. Thanks to his efforts, and the combined action of the European powers, those slaves for whom he pleaded have been freed, and the slave-trade in Africa is a thing of the past.

Another slavery exists, however: the slavery of souls to the tyranny of sin and the devil. And the White Fathers and White Sisters devote their lives to the deliverance of the Africans from this slavery, as did their Founder, who truly "spent himself and was spent" in their service.

SISTER M. JOHN RIGBY, W.S.

HAVE
YOU
ANY
?

Our Sisters in Nyasaland and Rhodesia would like to have some spiritual books for reading and meditation. They would also welcome some "Geographical Magazines", the pictures of which would be very useful to decorate the class rooms. If you happen to have any on hand and would like to make an act of charity, please forward them to:

THE WHITE SISTERS, *Lilongwe Mission*,
Nyasaland, British East Africa.

or

THE WHITE SISTERS, *Cilubula Mission, Kasama*
P.O., N. E. Rhodesia, British East Africa.

Africa Lay Apostolate Congress

A first hand account of the Catholic Action Meeting recently held in Uganda, as given by Sr. André du Sacré Coeur, White Sister, appointed by Rome as an official delegate under the title of an expert in feminine and family questions. Don't miss her article "Woman's Indignity in Africa", page 18.

A lay Apostolate Congress has recently been held in Uganda, the heart of Africa—

Such is the news that the Catholic Press announced to the public last December. Some extracts and reports have revealed to the world that Americans, Europeans and Africans met and studied together Catholic Action problems.

Nevertheless, this memorable

week marks a date too important in the history of African Missions to have merely a few reports in the newspapers.—

Organized by the Permanent Committee of International Congress for Lay Apostolate, whose headquarters are in Rome, this first meeting of Catholic Action leaders on African soil was a tremendous success.

We must say that it had been prepared many months in advance. First of all the spiritual preparation: countless religious and lay people prayed for the success of the Congress. In Rome, on Nov. 19, Vittorino Veronese, the distinguished General Secretary for the Permanent Committee assembled all the African priests



*His Eminence, Cardinal de Gouveia
and
Bishop Soares de Rosende*



*His Excellency, Archbishop Knox,
Apostolic Delegate
for British East and West Africa.*

and students of the different Ecclesiastical Colleges. He explained to them the aim of the Congress in Africa, and all promised the help of their prayers and sacrifices.

The technical preparation had also been done with great care by Mr. Veronese and his devoted secretary, Miss Donadeo. On their side, His Excellency the Most Rev. Joseph Cabana, Archbishop of Rubaga, and the Rev. P. Tourigny, White Father, Director of Catholic Action in Uganda, saw to it that no material detail should be neglected in the organization of the Congress in their own territory.

The selected place for the Congress, the new Seminary of Kisubi which dominates Lake Victoria, was remarkably suitable for the purpose.

On Dec. 7, large numbers of Congress delegates began to arrive. The following day, the glorious feast of the Immaculate Conception, His Excellency Bishop Knox, Apostolic Delegate from Mombasa, British East Africa, opened the Congress — and the Marian Year—in the beautiful Chapel of the Seminary.

The Welcome Address was given by His Excellency, Archbishop Cabana, after which the work of the Congress began: conferences, discussions, study of the most important questions relating to the future of Central Africa. The 250 participants, delegates, observers or experts, from 14 different parts of Africa, represented 43 Dioceses, Vicariates or Apostolic Prefectures as well as 14

Catholic International Organizations. There was no question of nationalities; all were sons of the same Father, animated by love for the same Christ Whose Kingdom they wished to extend to the four corners of the world.

Fifteen Bishops and three Apostolic Prefects surrounded His Eminence Theodore Cardinal de Gouveia, Archbishop of Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, and His Excellency Archbishop James R. Knox, Apostolic Delegate to British East and West Africa. No one was more accessible, more graciously affable, more serviceable than these eminent Princes of the Church.

Other personalities also took an active part in the Congress: among others, Msgr. John O'Grady, Vice-President for the international Conference of the Catholic Charities; Msgr. Luigi G. Ligutti, Executive Director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference in the United States; Rev. P. Wouters, General Bursar of the White Fathers in Rome.

Among the representatives of the 14 Catholic International Organizations were: Mr. Jowitt, ex-Education Director of Uganda; Mr. Douglas Hyde, who for twenty years, was a militant Communist in England before he became a Catholic. BOTH directed forums on Education. Other lay people present were: the Prince of Lowenstein, head of German Catholics; Dr. Aujoulat, President and Founder of "Ad Lucem"; Dr. Conombo, the High Volta Delegate; Mlle Christine de Hemptine, President of the International Federa-

tion of Catholic Young Women; Countess de Rosambo of France, of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations: Mr. Kevin Muir, of the J. O. C. of London; Mr. Nagdi Doss, from Cairo; in a word, the most Catholic assembly possible, in an atmosphere of cordiality and fraternal charity which was the characteristic most noticeable in the eyes of all.

Often the meetings were presided over by Africans and during the discussions, they did not hesitate to come forward and speak, sharing with others the fruit of their experiences, exposing their difficulties, their successes . . . and also their desire to develop Catholic Action to its maximum in their respective territories. They understood better the primordial, essential role which is theirs for the extension of Christ's Kingdom and how great their lay responsibility is in the co-operation with hierarchical Apostolate.

Already Catholic Action has made great strides in Africa; we must not forget that Blessed Charles Lwanga has been for many years the patron of African Catholic Action. But still more will be done in the future, and this Congress is both an accomplishment and a starting-point. As a matter of fact, as Mr. Veronese said in his Concluding Address, the magnificent Christianity of Uganda owes its vitality to the grace of God indeed, but also to the works and sufferings of the first Missionaries who arrived in the country 75 years ago . . . and with emotion, I thought of our Sis-

ter Dorothy, White Sister who has labored in Uganda since 1899 and who welcomed me so fraternally a few days ago at Kisubi.

Most impressive was the torch-light procession in the evening of Dec. 8, with the rosary recited in English and Luganda alternating with Latin and Luganda Hymns.

Then on Thursday afternoon, that pilgrimage to Namugongo . . . the modest church built on the site where Charles Lwanga was martyred, was too small to contain the crowd: only the Delegates, Priests, Brothers and Sisters who had come numerous from all parts of Uganda could find place inside the church, the faithful had to stay outside. Behind the main altar was a big fresco of Christ on the Cross and below it, the Baganda Martyrs dominating the flames of their funeral pile. An African Bishop, Bishop Rugambwa celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Catholics from all parts of the world united in the same prayer. Another African Bishop, Bishop Kiwanuka, commemorated the martyrdom of his compatriots. If the Church of Uganda numbers 1,172,000 Catholics and 46,000 Catechumens, 150 African Priests, 150 African Brothers and 600 African Sisters, is it not because the fire of love of Namugongo continues to burn in the hearts of her sons?

Friday saw crowds gathered in the church of Kisubi where the Way of the Cross was conducted by Archbishop McCann of Cape Town. The Christians of the Mission united once more their supplications to that of the Congress

members for their persecuted brethren in China, Russia and nearby Kenya.

The Congress was brought to a close on Sunday. A Pontifical High Mass in the open air, celebrated by Cardinal de Gouveia; permitted the Catholics of the surrounding districts, to feast solemnly the Immaculate Conception. Afterwards, all returned to the Seminary for the final report and Bishop Pava, Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Permanent Committee, summarized the proceedings of the meetings and drew some practical conclusions. The final motion, addressed to the Holy Father, was applauded with enthusiasm.

In the afternoon, a vibrant "TE DEUM" united for the last time all the Congress participants in the Chapel of the Seminary. The closing ceremony then took place before the public. Sir Andrew Cohen, Governor of Uganda and Lady Cohen, who in the morning assisted at the Pontifical High Mass, were present. After Mr. Ve-

ronese's speech and the African's vote of thanks, the Governor spoke and pointed out that it is in vain that builders work if God Himself does not construct the house.

His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate read a telegram from the Holy Father and His Eminence Cardinal de Gouveia brought the Congress to a close by giving the Apostolic Blessing to all.

Little by little, the members dispersed, regretting that these days of "CATHOLIC" union had passed so quickly and hoping to meet again at a future Congress.

WHAT DID WE LEARN DURING THESE DAYS?

First of all, the vigorous vitality of the African Church has been revealed to us. The 2,600,000 Catholics of British East Africa are firmly determined to live their Christian life fully and to conquer for Christ their brothers who do not yet know Him. Lay Apostolate is not a dead letter for them; and

There was no question of "color bar" when the Prince of Lowenstein took his place at the microphone.





Archbishop Cabana facing camera.



Bishop Kiwanuka chats with Bishop St. Denis



Mlle de Hemptinne (center) smiles as she leaves the session.

they want to use every means that the Catholic Action puts in their power. In the course of the discussion which followed the different reports, they showed maturity of mind and clearness of expression thus proving how well they understood all problems concerning the "évolués" and with what accuracy and sense of reality they had studied the different aspects of the question.

In the forums, the same qualities were noticeable. At the forum concerning the Family and the Woman, whose direction Mr. Veronese honored me with, I had on my right Mr. Rutahakana, a young African from Rutabo, Tanganyika, who had prepared in writing a dozen questions revealing his deep knowledge of the subject and of remedies that could help. On my left was a young African girl from Kenya whose interventions, full of good sense, made a deep impression. This Kikuyu girl spoke at the closing session. She reminded people of how her tribe, more backward than that of the Baganda, was now despised on account of the Mau Mau massacre. She brought to our attention the fact that faith was however strongly implanted in the hearts of the Catholic Kikuyus as the blood of their martyrs had recently proved. This young Christian, lucid and courageous, made me think that it would be just as unjust to judge the Kikuyus by the sect of Mau Mau as it would have been to think all French people were revolutionists during the dark days of "The Terror".

The maturity of the African "élite" was again manifested by their solicitude for the mass, and above all by their recourse to spiritual means. More than once, in the course of discussions or of forums one African or another would emphasize the necessity of prayer, of personal sanctification, of moral Christian living, which would so much facilitate the solution of all problems. And their daily Communion proved that

they themselves, conscious of their responsibilities as Catholic Action leaders, were drawing light and strength from Him Who alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Light.

Observers from other regions brought interesting facts to our notice; let us mention two of them. Mr. Magdi Doss, from Cairo, said that Egypt numbered 22 million inhabitants of whom there were 2 million Christians. Among these, only 200,000 are Catholic belonging to 6 nationalities and 7 different rites. Dr. Conombo, from High Volta, brought to light the individual and collective standard of life, extremely low in almost the whole of French West Africa and the fear that proletarian Africa would be the result of industrialism.

Finally, the Congress revealed to the African participants, what force and power of action they represent by their number and their organization. This African minority, so young, so vibrant, can give surprises to the world as Mr. Douglas Hyde stated. Well formed, well disciplined, submitted to the directives of the Hierarchy and at the same time taking the necessary initiatives, leaders will know how to transmit to others around the wealth of Christianity and to present to man craving for an ideal, a faith for which it is worth living and even dying, thus following the magnificent example given by Blessed Charles Lwanga, Patron of Catholic Action in Africa.

"Even though the Missionaries labor zealously; though they work and toil and even lay down their lives in leading the pagans to the Catholic Religion; though they employ all industry and diligence and all human means; still all this shall be of no avail; all their efforts shall go for naught, unless God touches the hearts of pagans, to soften them and draw them to Him. Now, it is easy to see that everyone has the opportunity to pray, and so this help, the very nourishment of the Missions, is within the power of all to supply."

Pius XI, the Pope of the Missions

A young couple, both fervent Catholics, had the misfortune of losing their little girl; then their baby boy fell sick. In a great distress, the mother brought him to us. Because of the seriousness of the illness, it was thought best to consult the doctor, who gave no hopes for the child's recovery. However, the Sister suggested that a novena be made to Mary Immaculate, who could obtain the baby's cure. The intimation was gratefully received by the parents.

The baby was also given Lourdes water to drink. Already during the first few days of the Novena an improvement was noticed. Little Heriberti began to take some milk and to sleep better. At the end of the nine days, he was cured.

Believe It or Not...

A Crocodile Speaks

We are an ancient and venerable race, we crocodiles. Here, at the great lake's edge, strange things have happened, seen only by us as we lie out of sight, nothing but the tips of our snouts projecting above the surface of the muddy water. Were we not adored as gods before the coming of the white men? We have seen weird ceremonies, wild dances and feasts by the side of the great lake. Many sacrificial victims have fallen to us and children too, despised as being born with the evil eye upon them.

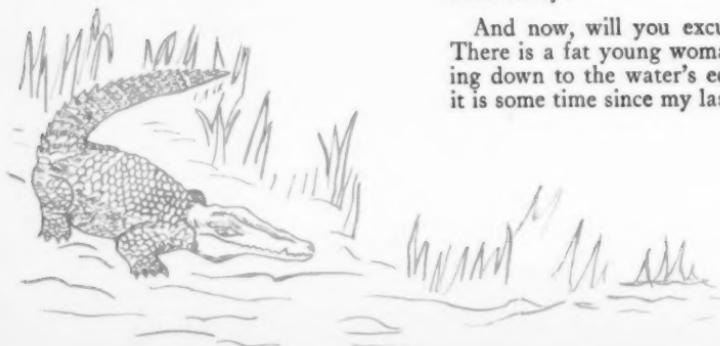
Sometimes we are instruments of vengeance. My uncle had the pleasure of devouring Senkole, the assistant executioner of King Mwanga. The poor wretch fell out of his canoe, drunk, and that was the end of him!

Then, we are very wise too. My friend, Lutembe, is especially so. He goes out of the water to be seen by the people, and they call him "tame"! . . . Poor people! . . . Even the students of Makerere University come to see the "tame"

crocodile of Victoria Nyanza. They stand round him and talk biology and learn much from him, and . . . one day they will see! . . .

I myself have even done a little apostolic work. I bit off the arm of old Luma as she washed her clothes in the lake. Soon the wound turned septic and she went to the White Sisters, as they tend the sick. They cared for her, dressed the wound, gave her good food and a comfortable bed, old Luma who had never slept on anything better than rushes in her life. And she could not make out why these Sisters were so kind to her whom they had never seen before, she who had no money and could neither read nor write. Then she noticed the cross each Sister wore on her breast and asked questions about it. She learned many things about the God-Man who dies for her and she realized why the Sisters had come to Africa and why they were so kind to her. So old Luma became a Catholic, Teresa, and died in peace. So you see a crocodile like myself may be of use to the Missionary!

And now, will you excuse me? There is a fat young woman coming down to the water's edge and it is some time since my last meal!





A Dream Comes True

After having officiated at the ceremony of profession, His Excellency, Bishop Zuroweste poses with the four new White Sisters who in a few days will be "en route" for Africa, the land of their dreams!



A newspaper reporter is very much interested on hearing that Sr. Joanella's dream of 14 years' duration is at last to come true. Sister met the White Sisters at a Mission Exhibit when only a tiny girl and decided then that she too would go to Africa as a White Sister.

"Thanks for the helping hand, I mean the helping knee," says Sister Josianne. It's hard work getting twice as much in a trunk as it will hold.





Sr. Joanella hopes that her companion has just a little more room left in her trunk.



A heavy snowstorm on the eve of the departure makes Sr. Thecla and Sr. Josianne wonder if they will ever see snow again . . .



*Sr. William finds
writing a farewell letter
a serious business.*



Kneeling at the foot of the altar, our Missionaries confide their future to our Lord before beginning their conquering expedition.



Not even the rain could dampen their spirits as in the early hours of the morning they said "Goodbye" to Metuchen.



"Cabin number 624 will be our convent for six whole days," says Sr. Josianne while Sister William tries to make it look like HOME by installing a very small "Blessed Mother!"



*One of our travelers makes friends on the boat with little Annette,
thinking the while of her future little colored charges.*



*As they sail down the Hudson River, an icy cold breeze blows
their veils askew. "Will it last long?" asks Sr. Joannella. "I don't
know," replies Sr. Josianne. "Be calm," puts in Sr. Thecla, "it is
not too bad." "Give me Africa!" retorts Sr. William.*



*Woman bearing the burden
of pagan rites*



*Christianity throws off
the shackles*

Woman's Indignity in Africa

SOEUR MARIE-ANDRÉ DU SACRE COEUR, W.S.

Reprinted courtesy WORLDMISSION, Fall, 1953.

The Africans have unquestionably preserved the essential doctrines of primitive Revelation: God the Creator and Rewarder, the existence of the soul and its survival in the next world, beliefs which offer a firm basis for missionary preaching. Further the natural qualities of the Africans predispose them towards Christianity: reverence for the sacred, respect for authority, parental and tribal, politeness, regard for one another and mutual assistance; good naturedness and resignation in time of trial.

Presenting the Gospel message to them as the natural completion and perfection of their ancestral religion is fairly easy, but it is quite another thing when it is a question of rapidly establishing solid and numerous Christian groups.

There are, first of all, the obstacles of ancestor and fetish worship the renunciation of which is unremittingly opposed by the Elders driven by fears of vengeance; then there are the much more complex obstacles arising out of polygamy, heritage of widows, family institutions, etc.

Because of this, the missionary cannot permit a young postulant, man or woman to be baptized without serious assurance of their perseverance; will these young people have the strength to live as Christians to fulfill the moral obligations of family life as prescribed by the Church. The missionary is repeating to them what Our Lord so often said to the crowds in Galilee: "It has been told to your ancestors . . . and I tell you . . .," must add: "Your ancestors could have several wives as did the Patriarchs of the

Old Law, but you must remain monogamous. Your ancestors could give a girl in marriage without her consent, but you do not have the right to give your daughters in marriage without consulting them. You must love your wife as Christ loves His Church. Your ancestors could give their children to others, but it is your duty to look after their education yourself."

And this list could be lengthened indefinitely, for every missionary knows that the principal obstacle to conversion, the stumbling block for the neophytes is to be found in family life which is still pagan in outlook.

Was not the situation the same during the first centuries of Christianity? Were not the Agnisses, the Cecilias and most of the other Virgin Martyrs of the primitive Church promised in marriage by their pagan fathers without any thought of consulting them?

Marriage and Patriarchal Authority

The same situation prevails in Black Africa today where the tightly organized family structures comprises several generations of the same ancestry, living under the authority of a single head, grandfather or perhaps, great-grandfather. It is his duty to assure the prosperity and perpetuity of the family by procuring wives for the young men under his authority, sons and grandsons. Often he must also provide for the sons and grandsons of his brothers and cousins dependent upon and working for him. He decides on the

marriages of the girls in the family, and whether this or that child shall be sent to school. He can give one sex to the mission and refuse another one permission to attend catechism classes: His orders approved by all the members of the family are ordinarily carried out without question.

Nearly always the heads of families arrange the marriages, one asking a girl, born or to be born, of the other group, in order to strengthen the bonds of friendship already existing among them.

Often the designated little girl is sent, at the age of four or five, to her future in-laws where her education takes place. When she reaches the age of puberty, they decide who her husband will be. In other tribes, the fiancé goes often to the home of his fiancée to help with the farming, repairing the huts, etc., and the young girl will pass the seasonal festivals with the family of her future husband. In this way the two learn to know, appreciate and love one another, and these marriages so similar to those of Ancient Europe work out just as well here as it did there.

In still other tribes, the young man and the young girl are ignorant till the day of the wedding as to whom their partner is going to be. This is the rule in the regions where the head of the family exercises his power arbitrarily, "in the old style"; it is also the case where young men in populations which have been made into a hierarchy under feudal rule, place themselves at the service of some chief, expecting nothing more in return but food, shelter and . . .

a wife after eight or ten years of loyal service.

Marriage always takes place after puberty, and when the young man or his family have fulfilled the obligations prescribed by local law; this ordinarily requires that the girl's family receive another girl in exchange, or numerous, repeated services, or a dowry (similar to the dowry of Germanic custom in Ancient Europe); unless the marriage and designation of the couple be anticipated and regulated by customs, as is the case in certain tribes.

The marriage does not give the young couple legal autonomy, it does not emancipate them from clan trusteeship; the husband remains subject to the authority of his family chief.

The wife's position on the other hand becomes ambivalent; she is bound to respect and obey her husband and his parents, and is henceforth at the disposition of her husband's family (in several tribes, she is passed to one of his brothers in case of impotence, or prolonged absence). But at the same time she must submit to the orders of the head of her own family, since she still remains a part of the family who retain the right to see how she is treated; on this basis they often assume the additional right to repeatedly demand numerous gifts, even going as far as to take the wife back if the husband does not give in to demands he feels exaggerated.

Evils of Polygamy

Everywhere the wife retains

ownership of the goods she has brought with her, whether it be clothing, utensils, jewels, or even cattle (this excludes the dowry paid for her which is remitted to the head of her family in landed property). But providing for her own subsistence as well as that of her children is her own responsibility.

In the forest the husband clears the land and the wife assumes the responsibility of cultivating the land for food and other purposes. On the plains the great polygamists allow each of their wives to cultivate the necessary fields. However, when the home monogamous or bigamous, is individualized, the wives till the soil with the husband, and each day receive from him the amount of food necessary to prepare the meals.

In the city the polygamists' wives go into business in order to provide for themselves and their children, because the husband, even if he is an official, keeps his salary for himself. Only the monogamists contribute towards household expenses.

Polygamy, it is quite evident, does not promote either economic union or close marital ties, nor does it foster good relations among the children of the various wives.

The husband can always put away the wife who steals, who is an adulteress, or who is accused by public rumor of being a trouble-maker. The wife mistreated by her husband takes refuge in her own family. If the husband does not wish to get rid of her, he comes back for her, bringing a "repentance gift." The offense would have

to be very grave for her not to accept it.

Upon the death of the husband, the widow must marry one of his relatives—brother or cousin, or one of his sons if he was a polygamist. (Polygamy, it must be recalled, often gives to an elderly man wives that are younger than his sons).

In certain tribes, the widow is forbidden to leave the family of her deceased husband. In others, she may leave and marry elsewhere, provided she refunds the dowry already paid for her. Her children, however, must remain in the husband's family. "Alone she came," they say, "alone she departs."

From this brief exposé, it is easier to understand the difficulties met by catechumens and neophytes who ask for baptism.

A young man and a young woman wish to be converted. But he has already been promised in marriage by his father or grandfather, to a pagan girl who is completely illiterate, although he himself has gone to school. Perhaps he has been baptized in the course of his studies, has become a doctor or teacher. When he takes his first position his family send him a

wife in order that he may not be alone. This solicitude on their part is a mark of interest and deep affection in a country where so many young men cannot marry before the age of 30 or 35. (The polygamists having a monopoly on the women). But does he love this girl? Will he ever love her? However, he cannot refuse her without displeasing his own people, and seriously offending the other family. If he marries her, won't he be tempted later on to take another wife, especially if at the Mission or during the course of his studies, he has met a girl having the same ideals and with whom he has talked over dreams of the future?

Complexities Facing Young Women

The situation is more complex, more delicate for the young women. They have been promised in marriage since childhood, perhaps even given consent without understanding its importance.

Then the school and catechisms have opened up other horizons. They know they are responsible before God and man for their actions. They return to their village to learn that the marriage date has been set, and that their



Our Front Cover

The tall Watutsi of Ruanda are among the most imposing figures in the world. Though fierce warriors whose kings asserted their authority through barbaric splendor and blood-thirsty massacres, they have now become one of the leading tribes in the Christendom of Africa.

future "husband" already has other wives. To accept him means renouncing the Christian life; to refuse him is to draw upon themselves the displeasure of the entire family, the condemnation of the women and the curses of the men (father, grandfather). Often they are beaten in an attempt to break down a resistance which their relatives do not understand.

Sometimes parents realize the evolution taking place in their daughter and regret having pledged themselves. However, not wanting to lose face by retracting their promise, the mother will intervene; "Go to your husband," she says, "and in a few months leave him. Having given you to him we won't therefore be drawn into a lawsuit." This is an insidious temptation which leaves the girl with the alternative of grave sin or of breaking with her family, especially if they have spent a long time ago the large sums received in exchange for her.

Who knows the sufferings, the insults, the tortured minds of these African girls? They are accused of disobedience and ingratitude, of bringing dishonor upon the family, of breaking the mother's heart. Many are mistreated, tied inside the hut, or severely beaten . . . Sometimes a special poison weakens both physical and moral resistance . . . Finally one or the other, tired of the struggle, gives in to filial affection or to violence . . . and the family hastens to profit by this moment of weakness.

Courage Preserves Faith

Even though Christianity in

Africa is faced by many local complexities, the picture is not entirely a dim one. Although it is a difficult, and sometimes a seemingly insurmountable task to break down ancient customs among the natives, we should be encouraged and edified by the devotion and enthusiasm that the Christian natives have shown toward the Faith.

To remain true to their faith, to remain Christians (or to obtain Baptism if they are still catechumens) they courageously endure reproaches and mistreatment until a time when they are able to elude the family surveillance. Then they take flight and find shelter at the Mission. An appeal is then made before the Administrator's tribunal and they are declared free, in a decision upheld by Mandel (1939) and Jacquinot (1951) decrees. (These are charitable measures for which the French Government is to be heartily congratulated).

Others have proven the strength of their Christianity by defying the complexities of their deeply rooted marriage customs. Widows have refused to marry the polygamous brother of their dead husband in spite of the pressure of their relatives. Those who will accept no new union are condemned to a life of solitude because they will not leave their Christian children with the husband's pagan family.

As soon as an African man dies his wives are inherited by his younger brother, according to pagan custom. Young Christian men have defied this custom and refused to marry their brother's wives, despite the material advan-

tages such a marriage offers. A Mossi chieftain, after his brother's death, inherited 150 wives. Instead of marrying them, he left them free either to become Christians and later marry a Christian of their choice, or be assigned in the usual way to the pagan relative of the deceased. This heroic act is now being imitated by others and it represents a vigorous reaction against ancestral custom and facilitates Christianization.

We see the heroic Christian spirit in the very young as well. There are many children who are forbidden by their fathers to attend catechism classes. However, their allegiance is first to the Faith and consequently they often suffer severe beatings for it. One little girl's father tore away her crucifix and seared into her flesh a Cross with a red hot iron, a cross that can never be taken away.

This courage and enthusiasm among the natives has not gone unrewarded. Many of the natives are called to the religious life and become the Priests, Brothers and Sisters of Black Africa. But here again the path is not an easy one, especially for the Sisters. With the exception of those whose parents were already Christian, almost all the others had been promised in marriage by the head of the family. It is not hard to imagine the suf-

fering and struggle they had to endure before experiencing that peace with the Lord reserved for them.

We wish these victories for Christ were more numerous. They are alas, still the lot of the privileged regions, those close enough to the Mission to benefit from its radiance. In other sections, children are born and die without Baptism; the poor, the sick and the aged remain abandoned; teenagers grow up to maturity without ever having heard of Christ and His Blessed Mother.

These souls receive the Faith joyfully, but the Missionaries are too few to reach every place. French Black Africa has 24 million inhabitants, of which more than 2 million are Catholic and 500,000 catechumens. But there are only 1,500 priests—1,200 European and 300 African — 2,000 Sisters of whom 500 are Africans. (In the United States of America there are 42,500 priests and 142,000 Sisters for 148 million inhabitants.)

We must not forget that this is a critical hour, that the Church has but little time to win Black Africa for Christ. In twenty-five years there will no longer be any pagans; they will all have become either Christians, Moslems or Communists.

THE NATIVE HIERARCHY IN MISSION LANDS

According to recent statistics, there are eighty-seven autochthonic Bishops in Mission lands. Among them are eight Africans, one Formosan, three Koreans, twenty-seven Indians, three Indonesians and one Siamese.

From Our Sisters' Letters

Gemma is a little Kikuyu girl who attends one of our schools in Kenya. (In our last magazine, mention was made of her family that was massacred by the MAU MAU because they refused to renounce their Faith. Sr. Mary Loretta tells us something of Gemma.)

Gemma is a charming child, rather timid, very reserved and intelligent, which makes the dear child realize all the more what the loss of her family means to her. I was asked to communicate the sad news of the terrible and horrible massacre which took place the previous eve.

Slowly and gradually the news was given that her mummy had gone to Heaven. Then her five brothers and sisters had followed their mummy and that finally her daddy had joined them.

It was heartrending to tell a child of ten, that the great havoc had been caused by the MAU MAU. You cannot imagine the shock and the great sorrow of the little girl.

We took her to the Chapel where Our Great Consoler and Heavenly Mother can heal wounds better than any of our poor words. Gemma's classmates on hearing the sad news had already assembled before the tabernacle. It was a pitiful moment, every one was sobbing with the poor little orphan.

Gemma's first words were, "I want my mummy." Then when she more consciously realized what had

happened she cried, "I want to go with them."

God in His infinite goodness sent her grand-aunt and uncle to visit her the same afternoon. They adopted Gemma as their own child and she went to pass a few days with them.

Gemma will always feel the loss of her family, but she is a brave and courageous girl and is highly esteemed by her school companions and teacher. She is a daily Communicant. Please keep her in your prayers.

* * *

Sr. Matthias Kalemba writes from Villa Maria, Uganda:

Two of our Sisters went to visit Namagoma, a little village on the outskirts of the Villa Maria mission. They left after breakfast and were accompanied by Clementi, a Catechist. As they went from door to door to visit the people, they noticed an old bald-headed man without ears enjoying the rays of the sun. After the usual salutations, the Sisters inquired about his health. "Well," he said, "I am very old and suffering from rheumatism. I am all alone on earth; all the members of my family are dead." On examining the old man,



Kikuyu Chief

Sister asked him what happened to his ears. "Oh, King Mwanga cut them off," he replied. "Don't you know that I was in prison with the Baganda Martyrs? Unfortunately, I was forgotten, and so missed the opportunity of giving my life for my Faith as they did."

Then the Catechist explained to the Sisters that he had been a fervent catechist all his life at Nnyankole, in the Rwenzori Mountains, but now being unable to continue his work, just arrived at Namagoma to wait his eternal reward.

The Sisters continued their visits and they were very much consoled in finding the homes neat and clean inside and a nice garden with flowers around the house. The babies were also well kept. All this the young women had learned in school and the Sisters were happy to see their teachings were being put into practice.

Further on, they met another

old man, who had a few pieces of bark cloth. The Sisters wanted to buy them, but he said he would soon die and needed them for his burial. It is amazing to see that our Africans are not afraid to depart from this world. On the contrary, they say, "We are going home to our Father; why should we fear?"

* * *

Sr. Mary of the Immaculate Conception writes from Mua, Nyasaland:

Three months ago two little orphans, but a few weeks old, were brought to the maternity hospital. They were nothing more than little skeletons. After being baptized, the baby girl went to Heaven. We feared for the life of the little boy as well, for we only had powdered milk to give him. Then we received the vitamins in drops from Metuchen. Now little Josefu is putting on weight. It is a pleasure to see him at present, and he gives all hopes of growing up.

There are almost 400 patients at our Leprosarium, not counting the non-leprosy victims who accompany them. The construction of the new laboratory is almost finished, and we are trying to cover the brick huts of our patients with tile, because the grass roofs must always be done over. Since there are over 150 huts, it is quite a bit of work.

Magic and Mischief

SATAN IS HARD AT WORK IN AFRICA



Among the Yorubas of Nigerja the witch-doctor, or, as he is called locally, the *Babalawo*, still yields a tremendous influence. There is scarcely a young man or girl contemplating marriage who does not consult him. A couple is left childless for a long time. Something must be done about it, so off they go to the *Babalawo*. Another is faced with a dilemma or is confronted by some serious business proposition. "We must not be too hasty; let us see what the *Babalawo* has got to tell us about it." Fortune-telling is *Babalawo's* main line of business. He is the priest of "Ifa" the great Yoruba oracle. In these matters it is not only the pagans, illiterates and "bush" people who call upon his powers, but even the educated and more sophisticated element, although these latter may be less open about it.

However, the profession of a *Babalawo* is not confined simply to fortune-telling. "Is there some unknown person trying to cause me harm—working evil against me? Then the *Babalawo* will be able to find out who it is and give me 'medicine' to protect me. Is there someone whom I hate, on whom I want to be avenged? Then the *Babalawo* will be able to give me a strong 'medicine' that will help me work evil against that enemy."

But the working of evil on people seems to be mainly the business of witches and wizards who are apparently legion and, more often than not, unknown—thus quite distinct from the *Babalawos*. In a bush village the teachers or Catechist may point out a tall tree and tell you, in all seriousness, that it is on top of it that all the witches of the village assemble at night in the form of birds to hold Council. The same Catechist or teacher may draw your attention to the dismal cry of the witch-bird. Hunters will talk about seeing these birds and of even trying to shoot them, but always unsuccessfully.

As may be well imagined, the poor people live in continual dread of witchcraft and the evil machinations of their enemies. Often a good, pious Catholic man will ask a Father to bless his house because nobody can sleep at night due to strange, uncanny noises in, over

and all round the house. These noises, he tells you quite simply, are caused by his enemies making witchcraft against him just to annoy him.

But now the point is, have these witches, *Babalawos* and so on, real diabolical power, or is their trade mere trickery and charlatanism? There is no doubt that a great deal of it is just trickery and a mere imposing on the simple minds of these poor people who have been for so many countless ages steeped in blackest paganism. On the other hand there is no doubt that many things happen which make one really wonder. The devil has reigned supreme in Africa for a very long time, and we can be quite sure that he does not like to see his power diminish. He must be thoroughly upset by the present spread of Christianity throughout that "dark" Continent, which was formerly his undisputed empire. The natural conclusion is that he must now be working overtime, as it were, to keep his grip on Africa, and it should not be surprising to find from time to time clear evidence of his even direct intervention.

The following is a true example of the kind of thing that makes one wonder—

Anastasia, a young Christian girl, refused to marry an elderly pagan. The man was angry and he warned the girl's father that she would pay for her refusal to marry him. He left the district a few days later and went to work on the Coast, nearly 600 miles away.

About two weeks later, Anastasia

suddenly became ill and had to be taken to hospital. The doctor who attended her had spent many years in the tropics and was familiar with all the known diseases. Yet, in spite of repeated examinations and laboratory tests he was unable to diagnose Anastasia's sickness. Meanwhile the girl lay in the hospital, quite listless, indifferent to everything that was going on; she seemed unutterably weary and in her lassitude would neither talk nor eat.

After about six weeks a priest was sent for to administer the Last Sacraments, for it was obvious that Anastasia was dying. Later that same day, the girl's father visited the mission and told the priest that his daughter had been bewitched by her rejected suitor and that nothing could be done.

But the priest had other ideas. At 6 o'clock next morning he offered Holy Mass for Anastasia's recovery. When he called at the hospital an hour later, he found her sitting up in bed enjoying a hearty breakfast. The Doctor and nurse could scarcely believe their eyes. Anastasia welcomed the missionary with a bright smile and the two had a long chat. But she was able to tell him nothing about her illness. Within another couple of weeks she was out of hospital and as strong and lively as she had been formerly.

Did the devil have a hand in Anastasia's sickness and was he overcome by the power of the Mass? It looks very much like it, but it is impossible to be sure.

J. J. BYRNE, W.F.



NEWS

What Do You Think?—This month our Magazine comes to you in a new form and under the title AFRICA. Why not give us your opinion of it? It would be a great help to us when preparing the future issues, for we wish to give you interesting and reliable information of Africa and the work of the Missionaries you so generously help to support.

Another U.S. Foundation — Arrangements have almost been completed for the establishment of a Postulate for the White Sisters in Franklin, Pa. As the house will be opened during the Marian year, it will be dedicated to Our Blessed Mother and known as MARY GLENN. This new home is a little over a mile from the White Fathers' Seminary started in 1948.

The Virgin Goes to Africa—A generous benefactor of Ohio, wishing to do something extra for our Blessed Mother during the Marian year, had the wonderful idea of erecting a shrine in her honor in the heart of Africa. A beautiful statue of Our Lady of Fatima will soon be on its way to light up the Dark Continent with the warmth of a Mother's love.

It was a tough job deciding which of our 145 Mission posts would be the lucky one, and the staff of our future Postulate greatly coveted it but in the end Thika won.

Mau Mau—Thanks be to God, our Sisters in the Mau Mau infested area of Kenya Colony are still safe but the latest news shows that they are not entirely out of danger. Armed Kikuyu men, hidden in the coffee plantation near the Sisters' Convent, were discovered before they had time to launch an attack. Twenty of them were captured. May we ask you to double your prayers that this reign of terror may soon come to an end . . .

Mother Anne Elizabeth, W.S. — has been officially appointed surgeon of the hospital in Bobo Diolasso, French West Africa. She received her medical degree at the University of Leyden, Holland and later specialized in surgery at the University of Groningen and gynaecology at the Hague. The Dutch Government awarded her the "Rode Kruis" in 1945 for her services to the Red Cross during the war.

ANNOUNCING "AFRICA" The NEW White Sisters Magazine!



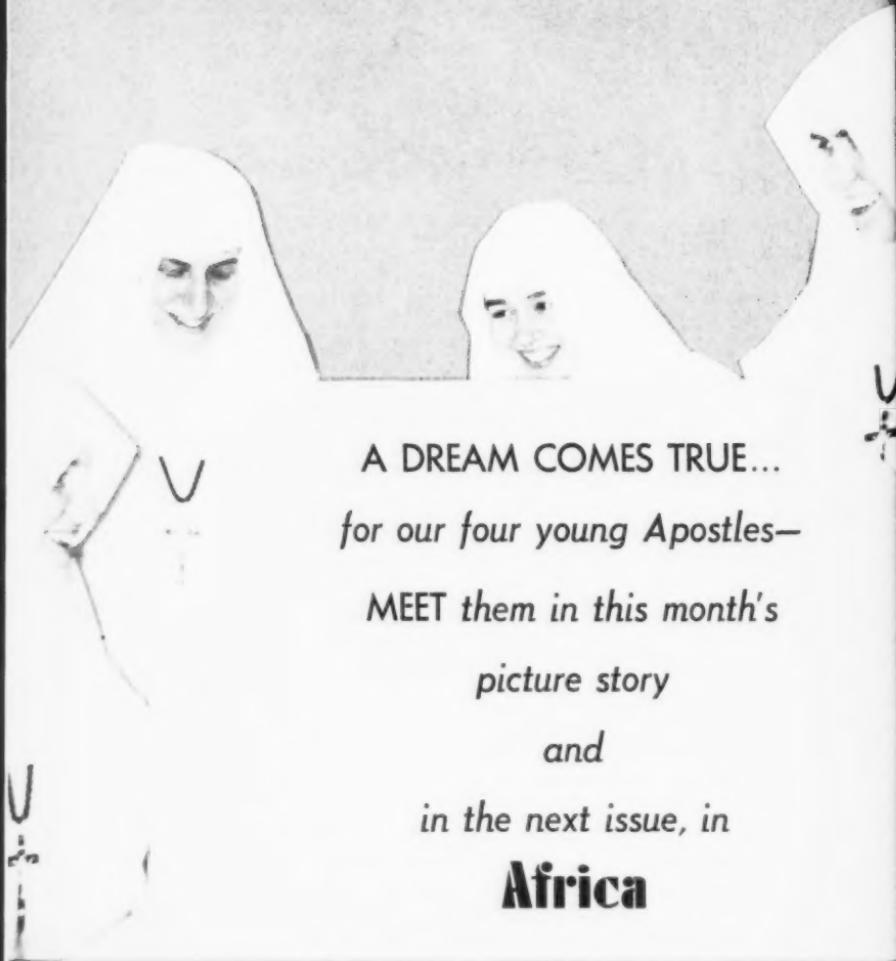
. MORE DETAILED !
CONVENIENT SIZE !
TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT IT.

— PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED \$1.00 SUBSCRIPTION FOR "AFRICA" —

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY or TOWN _____ STATE _____



A DREAM COMES TRUE...
for our four young Apostles—
MEET them in this month's
picture story
and
in the next issue, in
Africa

MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA

